

APPENDIX C: Consultation And Participation: The Planning Process

The Department of Transportation developed its Strategic Plan for FY 2000 – 2005 through a distinctive process utilizing innovative tools for future thinking, outreach and participative planning. Coordination and consultation occurred within the Department directly involving both headquarters and field staff; with other federal, state, and local agencies; the Congress and a vast number of consumers, providers and interest groups within the transportation enterprise. The deliberate and inclusive methods employed by DOT to locate, listen to and involve its customers and stakeholders are reviewed below.

Customer, Stakeholder and Cross-Agency Participation

The Department employed three major assumptions in the strategic planning process. First, the strategic plan must be based on accurate, timely and complete information. Second, customers and stakeholders are a driving force behind that information. Third, the greater the information that can be obtained from a diversity of sources, the greater the opportunity to effect improvement. Therefore, literally hundreds of customers and stakeholders were actively involved at various stages in the strategic planning process.

We began the planning process by forming a ONE DOT team composed of a representative from each of our staff offices and operating administrations. Once the team was formed, we proceeded through a series of discussions on how the 1997-2002 plan could be improved. We considered topics such as the relationship of the strategic plan to the performance plan; how the results of program evaluation would be incorporated into the planning process and management challenges. For example, staff from the General Accounting Office, DOT's Office of the Inspector General and the Office of Management and Budget provided suggestions in person to our strategic planning team in the summer of 1999. During September, October and November 1999, we held a series of strategy sessions to actually begin to write the plan. Members of the transportation industry, labor unions, special interest groups, trade organizations, and federal partners worked side-by-side with DOT staff in intensive working sessions to develop goals and strategies. All of the consultations helped to strengthen and shape the Strategic Plan. Indeed, the ONE DOT Strategic Planning Team welcomed, appreciated the effort, and was able to reach consensus on the majority of views expressed by our diverse group of stakeholders. Several stakeholders wrote to the Secretary thanking him for inviting them to take part in the planning process. We published our first, incomplete draft on the internet in December 1999 and asked for comments.

Reaching Out

Secretary Slater has reached out to our constituents and customers, identifying the challenges we face and building coalitions with them in a series of visioning sessions held across the country in a variety of venues as illustrated below.

- DOT convened the first ever National Transportation Safety Conference in March 1999 to advance President Clinton's top transportation priority, safety.
- Continuing the "Safer Skies for Africa" Initiative, part of our broader Transportation Initiative with Africa, Secretary Slater spoke to the "Global Summit on Building the African

Economy” about the importance of transportation; Secretary Slater also hosted more than 40 countries at an Africa Transportation Ministerial in Atlanta.

- In October, to support President Clinton’s call for “an efficient, safe and well integrated transportation system” for the Western Hemisphere, Secretary Slater led a mission to promote technology and encourage trade in South America.
- DOT hosted December’s “Aviation in the 21st Century—Beyond Open Skies” conference in Chicago, attended by 93 nations, which supported a vision of a liberalized aviation system that benefits economies, enhances safety and security and improves service for customers and shippers.
- Continuing a tradition he began in 1994, Secretary Slater conducted his annual Intermodal Tour in April 2000. Secretary Slater visited 15 cities in 12 states beginning at the Rio Grande and ending two weeks later at the St Lawrence Seaway.
- To ensure that the views of all stakeholders are reflected as we develop a policy architecture for transportation decision-making, Secretary Slater is hosting a series of 2025 Visioning Sessions. These sessions, which look forward 25 years, are currently under way around the country, and focus on the future of transportation and such topics as the auto industry’s workforce and the future of new entrant airlines.

Congressional Consultation

As required by the Government Performance and Results Act, the Department actively sought Congressional consultation in the various stages of development of the strategic plan. Deputy Secretary of Transportation Mortimer L. Downey wrote letters soliciting comments on the draft strategic plan to Chairs and Ranking Members of all House and Senate committees that authorize, oversee and appropriate funds for DOT programs. As a result, DOT staff held several consultations with Congressional staff on various aspects of the plan. Some members of Congress wrote letters to the Secretary and the Deputy expressing their views. All of the Congressional views were helpful in shaping the content of the plan. There were no contrary views expressed.

Future Scenarios

Future scenarios were developed and used for the first time by the Department as an innovative tool to analyze and view the transportation enterprise thirty years into future. They were intended to stretch thinking and generate discussion in the development of a more vigorous strategic plan.

Future scenarios are not forecasts, but are based on the concept that the future is uncertain and cannot be dealt with in a linear way or with single point forecasts. The Department’s scenarios defined plausible and logically consistent stories of how the future might unfold with regard to the transportation enterprise. The scenarios allowed participants to think about and prepare for a wide range of realistic future possibilities within the constraints of 1) the economy, 2) globalization, 3) the role of government, and 4) demand for change in transportation.

Hundreds of individuals representing the full spectrum of transportation providers, consumers and partners were actively involved at various stages in the scenario development by way of interviews, thinkers breakfasts with the Secretary and the Deputy Secretary, leadership roundtables, and workshops. The scenarios were also used in the actual strategic planning sessions as a device for strategy development. The participants included customers and stakeholders from across the transportation enterprise and government, again numbering in the hundreds. Data generated as a result of the scenarios during the planning sessions also contributed to the development of other sections in the strategic plan, such as the External Factors sections.

Internet Consultations and Comment

The Department's Internet posting of the draft strategic plan was intended to expand the strategic planning process to those individuals and organizations who have not customarily had direct access to the Department. This outreach generated an abundance of comments from private citizens, special interest groups, trade associations, state and local partners, and industry. Congressional stakeholders and federal partners also utilized the web site to provide their comments.

Nearly fifty percent of the hits on the DOT home page, subsequently visited the strategic plan comment site, and approximately ten percent of those individuals took the time to comment. Links to the other operating administrations' and departmental offices' home pages were also created and enabled additional comments. As a result of the Internet remarks, several significant strategies and perspectives were added to the Strategic Plan. Notable among the comments was nation-wide interest from bicyclists who correctly observed that early drafts of the plan did not include bicycle and pedestrian travel.